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McKean County Miner

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CHAPTER XIV

A RIFT IN THE CLOUDS

[illegible] was [illegible] before I was allowed to [illegible] after her condemnation. Even [illegible] have been permitted to [illegible] interview with her but for certain [illegible] business, which had been brought [illegible] to her behalf. Immediately after [illegible] sentence of death the [illegible] had [illegible] Belmore, and I had told him that he [illegible] sympathized with the case as it [illegible] had he had a strong conviction [illegible] of the truth had not yet been [illegible] found that Belmore entirely [illegible] views, and from him he heard of [illegible] efforts which I was making to [illegible] of my darling's innocence. It [illegible] good judge who smoothed the way [illegible] with the prison authorities and who [illegible] possible for me to have free communication with Daisy in her cell.

But it must not be supposed that we—for Harding had formally devoted himself to [illegible] in which I was engaged were idle during the two days of grace before I was admitted to an interview with Daisy. Little now could we do [illegible]. It was now the 6th of December, and I had already been warned that the day on which the martyrdom of my darling was to be carried out was the 28th of the same month. But three weeks were given to us, [illegible] which to establish her innocence. Even Harding—good, kind, never-to-be-forgotten friend—declared that neither [illegible] for sleep must one moment of [illegible] time be wasted unnecessarily. [illegible] think you, was my frame of mind?

Within a few hours of the passing of the [illegible] that day was in London, where he [illegible] services of the most eminent [illegible] of the day. The special mission [illegible] was to find Gregson. My [illegible] at dark day on which the trial [illegible] was a different kind. Putting all [illegible] of the last few weeks aside, I [illegible] Branksome and Foudrye and applied [illegible] to assist me in the task I had [illegible] on.

Dr. Branksome was just the same as he had been [illegible]. Yes, I bitterly reflected, he was just the same, as easy, cool, pleasant in his manner, the while Daisy was lying under sentence of death, as he had been on the [illegible] occasions of my acquaintance with him. Still he did the honors of the yacht for her and for me. I could not bear the thought of this cynical philosopher [illegible] against him when I first knew [illegible] Daisy to be guilty. Now I [illegible] for his head-lessness and would [illegible] have turned my back upon him forever, [illegible] had been that I might [illegible] help in the work of saving my darling.

[illegible] I found that this was not to be. I might [illegible] my conviction that Flinter was the real instigator of Mr. Maudsley's murder, and I repeated the reasons which led me to think so. It was the first time that Foudrye had heard the story of my finding the book on "Forensic Medicine" in the yacht, and [illegible] way in which it opened at the pages dealing with poisoning by strychnia. I thought he seemed startled by my statement. It had no effect upon Branksome, however.

"I see what you wish me to do, Fenton. You are anxious that I should find a victim to hang all sins in the person of poor Daisy, and you suggest Flinter for the purpose."

And so that the way in which you speak of the man whom you have known since she was in her mother's arms, and whom you professed to [illegible] friend, to me indignation. Dr. Branksome, I answered, had asked me [illegible] thought of you a few weeks ago, I should have said you were one of the noblest [illegible] men on the face of the earth; but I [illegible] am sorry to put the question to me, [illegible] all the [illegible] to tell him that I [illegible] you to be a [illegible] and [illegible] a [illegible] as a murderer, and [illegible] I have found the real murderer—when [illegible] who has been looked up to as a [illegible] and who has [illegible] the [illegible] in the attempt to save her [illegible] with cold-blooded [illegible]."

He turned on me without moving a muscle of [illegible] when he replied he spoke in [illegible]. It was just as pleasant and [illegible] as it had ever been.

[illegible] success and God-speed with all my heart, Mr. Fenton, and for the sake of [illegible] I give your injustice towards my friend. But I tell you this, sir, plainly. I have [illegible] of her guilt by the evidence [illegible] the court, and while I am willing [illegible] every effort to obtain [illegible] the mercy of the crown, my dear [illegible] will tell you that I am already taking [illegible] for that purpose. I am not prepared to say for whom I believe to [illegible] by throwing my sin upon another [illegible]. I know to my account."

[illegible] appealing to a man [illegible] was founded upon his [illegible] I could not answer [illegible] and I saw it would be useless [illegible] him. But in my heart I hated [illegible] more.

[illegible], I said at last, seeing that no help [illegible] be looked for here, "I shall act for myself, and if I have to spend every farthing I [illegible] in the world and to devote every day [illegible] remain to me of life to the task, you [illegible] upon it that I shall yet convict [illegible] by proving her innocence."

[illegible] interview with Daisy, when at last [illegible] to her in the condemned cell [illegible]. I shall say nothing about [illegible] directly upon the subsequent [illegible]. She was changed greatly when I saw [illegible] that she feared that I was far more [illegible] than she was. And probably [illegible] for I had nothing of that [illegible] and resignation which had [illegible] through all this time of agony. [illegible] her up through as this time of agony. [illegible] But I dared not spend the precious minutes [illegible] I had other work to do for [illegible] sake.

My first business I felt must be to get from her her own theory, if she had one, regarding the murder, and to prepare her for that. I told her freely all my own [illegible] and the story of my abduction, which she had only heard for the first time during the course of the trial.

"And you really believe that my uncle [illegible] to be spirited away in that fashion?" [illegible] Regard upon it, dearest, you are entirely deceived. My uncle was innocent."

"Then who could have originated the plot?"

"Flinter must have done so. Let me tell you what I know about him. He has been employed for nearly eight years at my uncle's establishment at Wangoora—the place where [illegible] I am told that he had been in [illegible] serious trouble, and that my uncle, who was usually one of the kindest as well as one of the most simple-hearted men, befriended him. Very soon after he came to the station as an ordinary shepherd he saved my uncle's life when he was nearly drowned in crossing a swollen river on our run. That, you may be sure, was never forgotten by my uncle. He very quickly raised him to one of the chief posts on the estate, and at the time that I came to live at Wangoora, six years ago, he was the constant companion of my uncle in his journeys, and had evidently secured his confidence."

"But you spoke of him to me as dangerous."

"Yes; he is dangerous, and bad, too. I very soon discovered that. But I cannot for a moment imagine that he would have plotted against his benefactor's life. He had everything to lose and nothing conceivable to gain by my uncle's death."

That was perfectly true, and it was the one great stumbling block in the way of my theory regarding the murder. Flinter undoubtedly had nothing to gain by it.

"Daisy," I said, "you must forgive me for questioning you on a subject that has long puzzled me, but about which I saw that you did not wish to tell me anything. I want to know all that you can tell me about that man whom I saw in the railway station here, on the day we first met. It is necessary that you should tell me all, my darling."

She blushed slightly, and then a faint smile lighted up her worn face.

"Ah, how happy an accident it was that led me to the carriage where you were seated that day! I should have been without a friend now but for that."

"But about this man—Gregson?"

"I should have told you all about him if there had been any opportunity of doing so after you spoke to me at the ball. For, do you know, that as one time he had tried to make me believe that he was in love with me, and when he found that I cared nothing whatever about him he began to persecute me in a mean, paltry kind of way, till I positively became afraid of him."

"Where was it that he first began to annoy you?"

"At Wangoora, about three years ago. You see, he was my uncle's confidential clerk, and came a great deal to the house. He had not then given way, as I fear he has done now, to bad habits, and he was a great friend of Dr. Branksome's. I never cared for him—in the least." Dear heart! she looked up at me with the happy smile of a maiden who tells her story for the first time to the man she loves, and for a moment we forgot all about the prison bars, and the two women who sat mutely watching us at the other end of the cell.

"When he found that I did not care for him he became, as I said, very disagreeable. He would try to waylay me and hint dreadful things about having me in his power, and I think that very soon he came to hate me as much as he had once professed to like me. Then he became careless and disobedient in his work, and he quarrelled with Flinter and was insolent to Dr. Branksome, and the end of it all was that he was dismissed."

"And what happened then?"

"Oh, a great deal. He professed to have discovered some dreadful plot in which we were all engaged for the purpose of imposing upon my uncle. I laughed at him at the time, for I knew of course that there was no plot of any kind, and I little dreamed of what was coming. But the man became hateful both to me and my uncle, especially when we found that he had actually followed us to England. I have never seen him, however, since that day at York."

"Tell me, dearest, who were the persons whom he charged with being in this plot?"

"Oh, I believe I was the chief sinner of all. He several times met me when I was alone, and accused me of it. Then he hated Flinter, and said dreadful things about him, and even about Dr. Branksome. But I never knew what the plot was to which he referred."

"Did Dr. Branksome know what the man was saying about him?"

"Of course he did. Why, I think that, next to me, he hated Dr. Branksome the most, and I remember his saying once that he could have sent him to penal servitude if he liked."

"In Dr. Branksome's presence?"

"Yes."

I was startled by what I had heard, for I remembered how Branksome had disclaimed any knowledge of the meaning of Gregson's language to me in the railway train when I had reported it to him. Some strange fan-cies stole into my brain.

"Tell me, Daisy, who do you think of Dr. Branksome himself?"

She glanced up at me, and that troubled, doubtful look which I had noticed more than once at Scarborough passed over her face.

"I do not know how I can answer your question," she said, after a pause, and speaking very slowly, as though weighing all her words. Dr. Branksome is a wonderful man. I never met any one like him. When I am with him he can make me do everything he wishes—or nearly everything. It is only when I am away from him that I doubt and fear him."

"Then you do doubt and fear him sometimes?"

"Yes, when he is not near me. When he is, I hardly seem to have any will of my own. It is very strange. I cannot explain it. Sometimes I think he is a very, very good man, but there are times when I think very differently of him."

"When did you see him last, Daisy?" I asked feeling as though I were on the brink of some great discovery.

"The day before the trial began. Did you not know? Has he not told you?"

"He has told me nothing."

"That is strange, for he promised that he would do so. He brought me my will, which I seemed that it was necessary I should sign before I was tried."

"Your will! I don't want to pry into your private affairs, my darling, but I must ask you if you left anything to Dr. Branksome?"

Anything! Why, I left everything to him, of course—that is, everything but some little things I want you—" She stopped, blushing rosy red.

"Do you mean you left all your uncle's fortune to Dr. Branksome?"

"Yes, you see he was the trustee appointed [illegible] that he was the only person to whom I could leave my uncle's money."

In an instant I saw, as when the blaze of summer lightning illumines the wide landscape for miles at a stretch, the whole conspiracy, in the toils of which my darling had been caught. But that vivid flash of consciousness faded almost as quickly as it came, and left me once more groping in the twilight—not, however, before I had taken by bearings, as it were, afresh, and had seen that our real position was altogether different from what, up to that moment, I had imagined it to be.

"Daisy," I said, trying hard to subdue my excitement, "are you aware that the power of attorney which you signed the other day makes me for the present absolute master of all your property? You have constituted me your other self. While you are in confinement here I can go where I will and do what I please in your name, as your representative. Are you willing that I should make full use of these powers?"

"Oh, yes," she cried; "who can use them better?"

"Then, darling, I shall make my first use of them by putting a veto upon you. I want you to promise that you will on no account allow Dr. Branksome to see you until we meet again. You know they will allow no one to visit you now unless you do sire it. Will you promise?"

"I will promise anything you wish."

"Then I must tell you that I shall go direct from here to Great Lorton, in order that I may search the hall from the roof to the cellars, if necessary, for proof of your innocence. The first thing I have to find is that parcel of strychnia. Can you help me?"

She shook her head doubtfully. "I wish I could; but I cannot recall what I did with it."

"By the way," I said, "do you know this?" I took from my pocket the rusted knife or dagger which I had found on my bed on the night that I slept at the hall.

She looked at it, and then the color dyed her cheeks once more.

"Where did you find it?" she asked.

"In my bedroom—the haunted chamber."

"Ah, I remember," she cried, "I remember now where I placed the poison! It is in the secret passage leading to the haunted room."

"Do you indeed remember, my darling! Are you sure?"

"Quite, quite sure. Stay, let me tell you all. On that night when my uncle heard, after he had said good night to you, of what had passed between us in the garden, he came to my room. I had not gone to bed, for I was thinking of all that you had been saying to me. We had a dreadful scene, as you know. Some one had poisoned his mind. He told me I should never see you again, and I was in despair. Then I remembered that you were to sleep in the haunted room, and that there was a private stair leading to it from the drawing room corridor. I resolved to send you a letter, so that you might not leave the hall thinking that I was unfaithful to you. My maid and I had discovered a passage shortly before, and I knew that it led up to your room, which was entered by means of a sliding panel. I wrote a note, and gave it to her to take to your chamber when she was certain you were asleep. She went with it; but returned almost immediately to say that she could not move the panel. We looked about for something by which to open it, and I saw this old knife in its sheath. It was given to me as a curiosity, years ago, by an old sailor. Taylor, my maid, took the knife, and went back to your room. When she returned she told me that she had placed the note upon your pillow, but that at the moment when she did so you had moved in your sleep; and in her fright she had left the room at once, forgetting to bring the knife with her."

"Then there was no ghost but the one you went to me, darling! But about the strychnia; for that is about the most important thing of all now."

"I placed it on a shelf over the door by which the secret stair is entered. It was the sight of the knife which reminded me immediately of the place."

I rose breathless with excitement.

"My darling, by God's help, all will yet be well. But I must not delay a moment longer now."

I strained her in my arms, and kissed her passionately. Half an hour afterwards I was on my way to Great Lorton, having dispatched a telegram to Mr. Eastmead, begging him to meet me at the Barton railway station.

I found the chief constable waiting for me on the platform at Barton. Like other men in "the force," he was probably happiest when engaged in bringing a criminal to justice than when he was saving an innocent person from an unjust punishment. But in Daisy's case he showed as much zeal as though he had been one of her personal friends, and I had no need to complain of the interest he displayed when I told him the errand upon which I was bent, and the important facts which I had elicited during my visit to the prison.

"I want you to accompany me in my search through the hall, Mr. Eastmead, both because you will be an unimpeachable witness regarding any discoveries I may make, and because I may need to appeal to the aid of the law in my task. For you will understand that I shall not do things by halves. This power of attorney makes me Miss Stancliffe's legal representative, and I shall use all my rights under it, not only to prove her innocence, but, if possible, to discover who the guilty person is."

"You have set yourself a hard task, Mr. Fenton," he replied; "but there is some hope of success; for I am quite certain that, as yet, we do not know the truth."

We had to walk from Little Lorton station to the hall. My interview with Daisy had taken place in the early morning, and it was barely two o'clock in the afternoon when I found myself once more standing on the broad terrace in front of the quaint old house.

The first person I saw was the evil-omened Flinter. He came forward with an insolent air and demanded my business.

"My business, sir, might very well be to give you into custody for the outrage which you committed upon me. As it is, I am here in the exercise of my rights, and have nothing to say to you."

"You won't get into the hall, at all events," he said, doggedly.

"None of that nonsense," interposed the chief constable, "or I shall have to take you into my hands, my man. Mr. Fenton, I imagine, is the only person who has any rights here, if it comes to that."

At that moment I saw Dr. Branksome sauntering along the terrace from the direction of the garden. He looked genuinely surprised when he saw who it was with whom Flinter was having this altercation. He came forward with quickened step, and his usual air of bland gravity.

"Mr. Fenton! Mr. Eastmead! This is an unexpected pleasure."

"Possibly," I said, all the suspicions of the man which during the last few hours had risen in my mind betraying themselves in my face and voice. "I am here, however, Dr. Branksome, as the representative of Miss Stancliffe, and as you will see, I am accompanied by Mr. Eastmead, as the representative of the law."

"I think, sir, you forget yourself," replied Branksome. "I have no wish to cast any doubts upon the sincerity of your interest in the unfortunate lady whose guardian I am, but I have the honor to be the only person who can claim to be her legal representative."

My hot blood mounted to my cheeks, and I was about to answer him angrily, when Eastmead again interposed.

"You gentlemen, Dr. Branksome, as the holder of a power of attorney from Miss Stancliffe. You will hardly dispute his right to represent her when you know that."

"A power of attorney! Monstrous! Impossible! She would never have signed such a document without consulting me."

"Dr. Branksome," I said, "we will not bandy words, if you please. I hold this power of attorney, and I thank God that I do so; and now I am going into this house to look for, and I believe to find, the proof of the innocence of the girl whom you professed to shield and to love."

"My dear fellow," retorted Branksome, with just the suspicion of a sneer in his tones, "why will you be always so mad about matters? If you had told me at first what your object was, you would not have needed any power of attorney to get admittance to this home. By all means enter and welcome."

He threw open the door in front of which we had been standing, and, bowing politely, waited till we had preceded him.

In the hall I turned and said, "I have come here, Dr. Branksome, to make a general search through the house; and although, as Miss Stancliffe's legally appointed representative, I see no objection to your accompanying me in that search."

"My good sir," he retorted, "I think you must really excuse me. You have not come here in a very friendly fashion this afternoon, and you can hardly be surprised if, under the circumstances, I conceive that it may be more satisfactory to yourself, as it certainly will be to me, that you should go about your work in your own way. At the same time, whenever you wish for luncheon you will find it on the table, and I shall be happy to join you. Of course, as Miss Stancliffe's representative, you need have no feeling of delicacy about making your wishes in that matter known."

His perfect coolness and composure had their effect upon me, and that lightning flash in which I had seen him for an instant as a villain of colossal iniquity, faded more and more completely from my memory.

But I lost no time in beginning my search. Mary Taylor, Daisy's maid, was summoned and came quickly, as did Mrs. Cawthorne, who, had returned broken-hearted to the hall at the close of the trial. I took explicit care that what we wanted to see was the door leading to the private staircase. She looked somewhat confused when I told her this; probably she recollected the last occasion on which she had herself made use of that door.

We found that the door was in one of the panelled recesses of the drawing room corridor. It had no handle, and any one might have passed it a hundred times without perceiving its existence. Taylor pressed the door in the middle, and it slowly opened, revealing a staircase, narrow, dirty and dusty, beyond.

"Mr. Eastmead," I said, "you represent the law, and I leave it to you to make the first attempt to verify the statement which Miss Stancliffe has made to me."

"Bring a light here," said the officer; and one of the many servants, who were watching us in wonder, darted into the adjoining room, and quickly reappeared with a lighted wax candle. Taking this in his hand, Eastmead passed through the door. I could see him moving the candle to and fro, and then he uttered a slight exclamation and closed the door upon us. Immediately afterward he opened it and came out into the corridor, begrimed with dust and cobwebs, but wearing an air of triumph on his face.

"I have found this on the narrow ledge or shelf above the door inside," he said.

He held out to me, as he spoke, a small parcel wrapped in paper that had once been white. I seized it with feverish eagerness. Pasted upon it was a label, bearing in writing the address: "Miss Stancliffe, Great Lorton Hall," and in print the word "Poison" in large letters, and the name and address of Smirke, the Little Lorton chemist. The parcel was sealed, and we saw that the seal bore Smirke's name.

The parcel was sealed.

I could not restrain the cry of joy and thankfulness which broke from my lips.

"My friends," I said to the men and women around me, "your poor mistress will yet be saved."

Mrs. Cawthorne burst into tears, as did most of the women. I can only answer for myself among the men. I could not keep back the tears of joy which were welling from my eyes.

It now occurred to me that, as most of the rooms in the hall had been searched by the police under Mr. Eastmead himself at the time of Daisy's arrest, I might begin my own investigation by exploring this secret passage in which we had already found so important a piece of evidence. Bidding the servants remain where they were, we slowly climbed the narrow winding stair. It led into a corridor equally narrow and very long, unlighted and ill-ventilated, so that more than once the candle which Eastmead carried seemed to be on the point of expiring.

At the end was apparently a blank wall of dark oak. But looking closely at it I detected the place where the girl had introduced the knife on the night when she had brought to me the note from Daisy. I had brought the knife with me, and in another instant, by means of it, I had caused the panel to glide into a recess. It revealed an opening of the depth of the wall, beyond which there was another panel. This I was able to move without difficulty. I pushed it aside with my hand. Still the way was barred, but upon this occasion it was nothing more substantial than the heavy leather hangings of the haunted room. Great ingenuity had been shown in the arrangement by which an opening could be made at will through these hangings without any evidence of its existence being afforded to an occupant of the room.

Once more I found myself in that well-remembered chamber. It looked cold and dark despite its handsome furniture. Apparently it had not been occupied since the night when I slept there. I opened the door leading into the little sitting room where I had breakfasted by myself on the morning on which I left the hall. To my surprise I saw signs of having been recently occupied. There was a book lying on the table. I recognized it instantly. It was the copy of Guy and Ferrier's "Forensic Medicine," which I had studied so intently during my imprisonment on board the yacht.

"We are in the enemy's stronghold," I said to Eastmead. And I bade him take the book in his hand and see where it opened. He did so with the result which I expected.

He shook his head gravely. "I think, Mr. Fenton, we shall be justified in taking a very close look at anything we can find here."

There were several books on the table. They were for the most part old account books, some of them bearing Flinter's name. They appeared to relate to transactions which had taken place some years previously in Australia. One volume was of a different kind. It was a cheap metallic memorandum book, such as a man like Flinter might very well have used for the purpose of keeping notes of incidents of importance. Eastmead took it up and opened it. For some time he appeared to be examining it with a look of bewilderment on his honest face.

"I can't make anything of this, can you? Is it Greek?"

He handed the open book to me, and to my disappointment I saw that, whatever might be the nature of its contents, I was none the wiser through possessing it. Every page was covered with cabalistic marks like nothing I had ever seen before.

"I think we may as well leave this [illegible] us," said the chief constable. "But I am going to take these other books for examining at my leisure."

I acquiesced for the moment in his proposal to leave the little note book in cipher where we had found it, but before we had completed our close examination of the two rooms I had changed my mind, and without any scruple regarding the robbery I was committing upon the unconscious Flinter, I slipped the volume into my pocket.

It would be tedious to tell of the long hours which we spent in examining the other portions of the hall. Nowhere did we find any evidence that seemed to bear on the crime of which the place had been the scene. Indeed, Eastmead warned me beforehand that this would probably be the result. The one part of the hall which had escaped his notice on his first visit had been the servant's staircase. The other articles which he had found, and which might possibly be of use against Flinter, had evidently been brought to the hall after our party had landed from the yacht, and consequently after Daisy's arrest.

When our tedious task was completed, we went to the dining room, where we found Dr. Branksome awaiting us. Cold meat and wine were upon the table, and we were thoroughly exhausted by our labors that we were glad to make a hurried meal before departing to catch the last train to York. I did not care to talk much to Branksome. He had heard of the discovery of the strychnia, but said wonderfully little about it. I [illegible] was [illegible] to [illegible] brilliant conversation.

CHAPTER XV.

JAMES GREGSON'S STORY.

It was late at night when I got back to York, excited and elated by the great discovery I had made. A letter from Harding awaited me, in which he told of the steps he was taking for the purpose of finding Gregson. Through the celebrated detective Max Bielski he believed that he might at last get on his track, though the chase would no doubt be a difficult one. I did not go to bed until I had answered the letter and given Harding a full account of my visit to the hall. I concluded by imploring him to come to me at once, if that were possible, so that we might advise as to the next measures to be taken.

"A gentleman is waiting to see you, sir, down stairs." It was early the next morning, while I was at breakfast in my private room at the hotel, that I received this intimation.

"Do you know his name?"

"No, sir; he would not give me his name, but he said I was to tell you that he came from Mr. Harding."

"Show him up at once."

The stranger was a short man, with powerful frame, clean shaven face, and bright eyes that seemed to see everything at once.

"Beg pardon, sir, for intruding," he said, addressing me with a business like air; "I thought you might not wish to have my name spread over the house, for you see it is rather a well-known name now, sir. I am the detective Mr. Harding has been employing on your account I believe."

"Mr. Bielski!"

"Yes, Max Bielski at your service, sir." He pulled a note book out of his pocket and opening it continued: "I understand you want to meet with a party of the name of James Gregson, aged about thirty, tall and fair haired. Well, Mr. Fenton, don't be offended, but I must tell you at once that that description won't give me any help in finding the man. You see, sir, there are thousands of tall, fair haired men of thirty walking about the streets; as for the name, you may be sure that Mr. Gregson is not Mr. Gregson now, if he has any reason to wish to keep in hiding. You will have to tell me something more."

"But I am afraid that is just what I cannot do."

"Well, we'll see, sir. You must excuse me putting you through your catechism, Mr. Fenton. It must be done, if I'm to lay hold of your man."

And in a surprisingly short space of time Mr. Bielski had made himself the master of all the particulars, good, bad and indifferent, which I knew about Gregson, including even the story Daisy had told me. When I told him of the photograph of Daisy I had picked up in the railway carriage after Gregson left it, he at once asked me for it; and—very reluctantly, for it was the only portrait of my darling which I possessed—I parted with it to him.

At the end of an interview of three-quarters of an hour the detective pulled out his watch, and rising hastily said: "I must be off, sir. I've just time to catch the express back to town."

"But are you going to London to find Gregson? My own opinion is that you'll find him somewhere about here."

"That is my opinion also, sir; and no doubt if I had three months to spare I could lay a heavy wager that I should nab him in this very city of York before the end of that time. But you see, sir, it is a matter of life and death; and a single day might mean all the difference; so I must follow the safe clew you have given me, and not the uncertain one."

"And what is the safe clew?"

"The time about which Gregson lauded in England from Melbourne. This is all I have to go upon. I must track him down from that hour to the present. Good day to you, sir." And in another instant he was hurrying off to catch the ten o'clock express to town.

The remainder of that day I spent in consultation with our solicitor, and in awaiting the arrival of Harding. He came to York by an evening train, and pressed my hand affectionately when we met upon the railway platform.

"What do you say, Harding; shall we apply to the home secretary at once on the strength of the discovery of the strychnia?"

"No, we must wait. Don't look disappointed, my dear fellow. As soon as I received your letter this morning I hurried off to Belmore's chambers and was fortunate enough to get five minutes of his precious time. Indeed, I believe he gave me fully fifteen minutes if the truth must be told. I read your letter to him and asked him his advice. 'I should like to consult Grange before I say anything,' was his answer."

"You mean the judge."

"Precisely. Our one hope, you know, is in the judge. It will rest with him in the end whether there is to be a pardon or not; and Belmore, who knows that all his sympathies are on our side, is anxious to take him along with us in every step."

Accustomed as I had been to see in a judge only the awful being clothed in a medieval costume, who dispensed life and death, liberty and slavery, from the judgment seat, I could hardly realize the fact that such a man should be full of active human sympathy, even on behalf of a fellow creature whom he had just doomed to the gallows. So it was, however.

"Well," continued Harding, "I had a note at four o'clock from Belmore to say that Grange was very much pleased to hear of this discovery, which would of course need to be properly authenticated; but that something further must be obtained—something if possible tending to break down the evidence as to motive—before any steps were taken at the home office. You see it is not a commutation of the sentence that we want—it is a free pardon."

"Yes," I answered, feeling depressed and disappointed, for I had thought that all our troubles were at an end now that we had discovered the strychnia, "I suppose we must go on, but I confess that I seem to be at the end of my resources."

"Now, my good fellow, you must not give up in despair. Let us wait until we have caught Gregson. Who knows what he can tell us?"

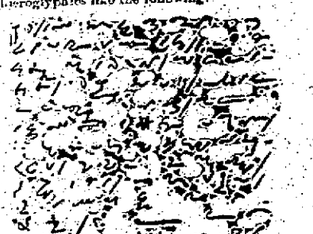
I sat in gloomy meditation. Four precious days had already passed. It is true that they had not been wasted; but Daisy still lay under her awful doom, which was hourly drawing nearer to her. A heavy sigh broke from my lips.

Harding, evidently anxious to divert my thoughts, asked me to tell him all the particulars of my visit to the hall, and I complied with his request.

"Have you got the memorandum book you picked up in the room Flinter had been using?"

"Yes," I said, and threw it across the table to him.

He opened it and looked at it long and carefully. Alas! Nothing was to be made out of it. Page after page was filled with hieroglyphics like the following:



Harding studied the book for nearly half an hour, often making jottings on a sheet of paper and referring again and again to particular pages. He laid it down wearily at last.

"I can do nothing with it," he said. "It is evidently some very intricate form of cipher. Such things are to be read, however, and we must have this read. We cannot afford to lose any chance of hitting upon a clew."

"But whom can you get to read it?"

"We must think that over. Perhaps Bielski may be able to give us some assistance."

The next day was spent in a journey to Barton at the request of Eastmead. From Barton we went with Eastmead to Little Lorton for the purpose of seeing Smirke, the chemist. That person immediately recognized the strychnia sold to Daisy. But he was able to afford additional proof of the identity of the parcel. On removing the sealed outer wr

The McKean County Miner

OFFICIAL PAPER FRIDAY

Entered at the Postoffice at ... as second class matter.

IN ADVANCE ... per year

ADVERTISING RATES

... Dec 3rd 1886

THE ... JUDICIAL DISTRICT.

At the last session of the Legislature an act was passed both houses providing for an Additional Law Judge in the Forty Eighth Judicial District composed of the county of McKean with Potter attached. The bill was vetoed by the Governor for the reason stated and failed to show the necessity of the additional Law Judge in this district. This bill provided that the Governor should appoint the additional Law Judge for this district. There has not been such a change in the population of the district as would justify an urgent call for additional judges, taking into account the census of 1880. But taking into account the increase claimed for Potter county since the census was taken the aggregate population of the two counties does not exceed the number which the Legislature recently adopted as a basis for the creation of additional judicial districts. The institution now makes a claim for a population of over sixty thousand. What this amendment relates exclusively to the right of counties to have a judge set apart from any judicial district to the designation of other counties in the division of the districts, an insight into the bill may be had by reference to the number of legislators that would be embraced in the district to make it a judicial district no matter how small the population of the counties composing it. It is the misfortune of the people of large counties that the interests of such counties are not the interests of factors in other districts. The appointment as to the Governor in the matter of traveling from one county to the other together is only another instance of the inconvenience to which the people of the larger counties are subjected. The additional Law Judge bill should not have become a law. The interests of the people ought not to prescribe the rules for the working of the judicial machinery. Further, the increase of population or increase of business arising from an increase of population or business or both which would justify the creation of the law has not occurred in the district for which the bill was framed. For these reasons and others which might be stated we refused to affix our signature to the bill.

JOSEPH PATTISON

AGAINST TOO GREAT LAKE

Mr. Pattison communication from Washington relative to the lake in the proposed National Park. The territory ceded to the United States by the Mexican treaty of 1848 was so new that it was not known that there was a lake in the region. Mr. Marcy, who was Secretary of State at the time, and so new that the treaty was made, was not aware of the existence of the lake. Mr. Marcy, who was Secretary of State at the time, and so new that the treaty was made, was not aware of the existence of the lake. Mr. Marcy, who was Secretary of State at the time, and so new that the treaty was made, was not aware of the existence of the lake.

Following is the ... by the last Legislature by an almost unanimous vote in both houses and ... message.

AN ACT

... Section 1. Be it enacted ... that in the event ... at the next ... election ... the ... of ... the ... of ... the ... of

Mc Kean County Miner

NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS.

Your paper shows the time to which you have paid. Please have it changed if not correct. If you wish to discontinue your paper you will please notify us at once as we do not like to send papers to those who do not want them. If you take it from the office regularly but do not pay for it you are stealing from the publisher. Please pay up.

Smethport Pa., December 3, 1886

READ OUR CLUBBING TERMS.

We have perfected arrangements whereby we can furnish the following papers and periodicals with the MINER from now until the first of January next, or for 25 days, for the subscription price of the publication named. Many of the orders have come in already, but there is no reason why they should not have also. Orders may be made by postal card or otherwise. Our offers are as follows. We will furnish for one year and the Philadelphia

Inquirer for	$1 50
Philadelphia Record	1 50
Philadelphia American Farmer	1 50
Philadelphia Weekly Press and Health for	2 00
Philadelphia Weekly Press, Cosmopolitan and Health and American Farmer	2 40

The subscription price for these four papers is $2.40 and we offer them at just $2.00.

The Philadelphia Record is one of the best papers published in the United States. The *Cottage Hearth* is a well established monthly magazine published in Boston. *Health and Home* is an excellent monthly journal published at Fort Wayne. Specimen copies of all these papers can be seen at this office.

We have also arranged with the New York Weekly Herald the leading family paper of the United States for one year for $2.00

We have also arranged with the New York Weekly World the leading democratic paper of the United States for one year for 1.00

Subscribers to the MINER and the World can also obtain a handsomely bound copy of Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, which is entitled to the latest issue of the work. This is a premium that should be taken advantage of by every one.

We have also arranged with the New York Independent the leading religious journal of the United States, and a subscription to the MINER and the Independent will be sent for one year for 3.00

We have also arranged with the great American Agriculturist for one year for 2.00

Subscribers to the MINER and the Agriculturist will receive a copy of the engravings of the Home of the Presidents.

We have also arranged with the Ohio Farmer a leading weekly agricultural, live stock and family journal for one year for 1.00

The Miner and the Ohio Farmer and a leading weekly agricultural, live stock and family journal for one year for 1.40

The Miner and the Cincinnati Weekly Commercial for one year for 1.00

The Miner and the Cincinnati Weekly Enquirer for one year for 1.20

The Miner and Harper's Bazar for one year for 3.00

The Miner and Harper's Young People for one year for 2.00

We have some 200 books in this office which we intend to give away. Any subscriber to the MINER can have one of these books by calling at the office and leaving in advance.

LOCAL AND HUMOROUS.

It has been three weeks since it snowed.

The Odd Fellows intend to have a ball this winter.

The new tannery building at Mt. Jewett is nearly finished.

The Newell tannery is reported to be running full time this week.

J. W. Keator of Bradford has been appointed a notary public.

The Bradford Era has been enlarged to a seven column folio.

The killing season closed on Thursday of last week.

Mr. Wm. Wedderspoon died Dec. 1st.

The first severe cold of winter.

Ice is beginning to be housed in Bradford.

Turkey Day, December 25th. Luckily it comes but once a year.

We often hear from those parts of the country where it has been unhealthy recently.

It is said that the new Methodist church at Bradford will be dedicated on Christmas day.

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We are informed that a Democratic Club has been organized in Port Allegany

OH! MY BACK

Kidney aches or cold attacks that weak back and nearly prostrates you.

BROWN'S IRON BITTERS

QUALITY NOT QUANTITY

THE BEST TONIC

Strengthens the Muscles, Nerves, Purifies the Blood, Gives New Vigor, Builds the Whole System.

Sanford L. Strand, Sanford, Iowa, says: "Brown's Iron Bitters is the best I have known in my 30 years' practice. I have used it personally and in all debilitating ailments that have so severely and it all debilitating ailments that have so severely on the system. Use it freely—my own family do."

Mr. W. P. Snowden, 327 Maulding, Louisville, Ky., says: "I was completely broken down in health and troubled with pains in my back. Brown's Iron Bitters entirely restored me to health."

Genuine has Trade Mark and crossed red lines on wrapper. Take no other. Made only by BROWN CHEMICAL CO., BALTIMORE, MD.

A PRIZE to agents of goods which will not advance in price for one year. Sells at sight. Profits immense. Exclusive territory. All of either sex can make from first hour. The broad road to success, fortune opens before the workers, all who engage. Address at once, Elgin Co., Box 148, Maine.

U. B. Mutual Aid!

This Company received its charter 26 March 11, 1869. It has paid to widows and orphans

IN CASH

$4,474,000!

Up to the present time. The Company is known as the

MOST RELIABLE

one to insure in. It has always paid its losses

IN FULL

AND

PROMPTLY.

I have paid $1,000 of this Company's money to beneficiaries in this county, since I have been its agent, as follows:

To the representatives of S. S. Shotwell, Smethport,	$1,000.
Mrs. Geo. Walker, Kane,	$1,000.
Mrs. Wm. Fitzpatrick, "	$1,000.
Mr. Michael Burke "	$1,000.

The latter was killed within eleven days from the date of his insurance which cost him only $9.50

C. A. WEST RIDER, Agent.

Smethport, Dec. 22, 1885

Chick-Chick-ER-LEE'S

ASK YOUR GROCER FOR IT. ASK YOUR DRUGGIST FOR IT.

Prevents Roup, Prevents Gapes, Prevents Cholera, Prevents Egg-Eating, Prevents Laying Soft Eggs, Makes Hens Lay.

IT IS NO POWDER. IT IS NO MEDICINE.

Is Sold for Five Cents Per Pound, in Boxes.

Chick-chick-er-lee is not a food. It prevents all diseases of poultry, the great egg producers of the South. It is the only egg food ever discovered in the South. It is the only egg food ever discovered in the South. Patented in United States, Canada and England. It costs only five cents per pound. Every box is guaranteed to do as we claim. Attendance of poultry, Eggs and young chickens, and the saving of fifty per cent. in the cost of feeding. Send for circulars. If your druggist or country merchant or general dealer or storekeeper will not get it for you, send me one dollar, and I will send you twenty pounds C. O. D. by express, or send for it. All of either can be had by return freight